

Appendix 15



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Department of Human Services

Youth Services Administration

04 MAR -3 PM 1:18



Marceline D. Alexander
Interim Administrator

March 2, 2004

Mr. Austin A. Anderson
Interim Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
717 14th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

RE: *Management Alert Report 03-I-013 (Abandoned Buildings at Oak Hill Youth Center)*

Dear Mr. Anderson:

This correspondence is transmitted to you in response to Management Alert Report 03-I-013 dated January 28, 2004, in which the Office of the Inspector General ("OIG") makes two recommendations to the Youth Services Administration ("YSA") regarding abandoned buildings located on the parcel of land in Laurel, Maryland, which includes the site formerly known as Forest Haven, and also includes the Oak Hill Youth Center ("OHYC"). OIG recommends that the YSA Administrator initiate the following actions:

1. Ensure that each abandoned building at the Oak Hill Youth Center is secured against vandalism and safety risks; and
2. Ensure that the electrical and water services to unused buildings are disconnected.

In response to your specific recommendations, please be advised as follows:

While your correspondence generally refers to the OHYC, YSA currently occupies only limited buildings located on the old Forest Haven site. YSA is working with the Office of Property Management ("OPM"), the Office of the Corporation Counsel ("OCC"), and fellow administrations within the Department of Human Services ("DHS") to identify which District of Columbia agency is responsible for securing abandoned buildings on the old Forest Haven site. The preliminary results of our investigation indicate that specific properties discussed in your investigation may belong to DHS's Mental Retardation and Developmental Disability Administration. The DHS Office of the Director will follow up your recommendation.

In addition, YSA has learned that the Forest Haven facility was constructed prior to current water, sewer and electrical standards. YSA cannot disconnect the lights associated with the Forest Haven parcel of land because these electrical systems provide the street lighting necessary to maintain security visibility at the Spruce Cottage (also known as Unit 6 for female residents), along each street in the parcel of the land, for the OHYC Training Academy, and the Union facility. In addition, YSA must maintain water flow because it provides water to all fire hydrants on the property and serves the Woodland Job Corps, which was originally a part of this site.

Should you have any questions regarding these responses, please contact Clydie A. Smith, Correctional Program Officer, Youth Services Administration, at (240) 456-5005.

Sincerely,



Marceline D. Alexander
Interim Administrator

MDA/cas

cc: Robert C. Bobb, City Administrator
Lori E. Parker, Acting Deputy Mayor for Children, Youth, Families and Elders
Yvonne D. Gilchrist, DHS Director
James Parks, DHS Deputy Director
Mark D. Back, YSA Interim Special Counsel